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ABSTRACT

This document describes the current links between the world of work (employees, employers, industrial sectors, and companies) and the world of vocational training (in-company, inter-company, and school-based training bodies) in member states of the European Community; and the degree and nature of the involvement of the social partners in the development, implementation, administration, and control of training programs, including the scale and nature of state intervention. The industries in which these relationships were studied were the construction, metal working, electronics, insurance, and banking industries. The following research questions were among those addressed: (1) Why is it important to increase the participation of the social partners in decision making?; (2) Under what conditions can such participation be a positive contribution?; and (3) What are the major obstacles to greater participation? Following an introduction, the second chapter describes the current situation against a background of social, economic, and technological changes. The third chapter analyzes the situation in member states, including the participation of workers in their organizations; their participation at local, regional, and national levels; the participation of sector-specific organizations; the various forms of social dialogue; the role of the state in the social dialogue; the autonomy of the organizations of social partners; vocational training as a subject of the social dialogue; and preliminary results from the analysis. The fourth chapter takes up problems and prospects of developing the social dialogue. A 15-item bibliography concludes the document. (CML)

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CEDEFOP Document

The social dialogue in the Member States of the European Community in the field of vocational training and continuing training

- Synthesis report

European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training

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Foreword

Manuel Marin
(Vice President of the Commission of the
European Communities)

On the Social Dialogue within the Framework of the Development of the European Communities

The EC and the institutions established under the treaties are founded on the desire of the Member States to make progress in the European process of unification, i.e. the governments of these Member States are the joint sponsors of this process.

From the beginning, however, the employers' and employees' organizations of the individual Member States and their confederations at European level have been involved to a considerable degree in these efforts, for example in the precursor organization, the European Coal and Steel Community, since 1952.

This was and is expressed inter alia in the existence of the EC Economic and Social Committee and the numerous committees within the Council (in particular the Standing Committee on Employment), and the committees within the EC Commission (the Advisory Committee to the European Social Fund and the Advisory Committee on Vocational Training). There, the social partners are involved in developing and pursuing EC policy in this field.

In addition, there are joint or tripartite bodies in the most varied areas, which are supported or consulted by the EC Commission.

A concrete example of the involvement of the social partners, not only in issues related to the preparation of new projects but also to their implementation and organization, is the European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training (CEDEFOP) in Berlin. CEDEFOP is a Community institution which provides an infrastructure by means of which the social dialogue can be placed on an ongoing basis and consultations can be properly prepared and followed up.

It was and still is the case that all EC proposals, initiatives, programmes and joint declarations of political intent in the field of initial and continuing vocational training and employment policy are only approved following extensive consultations, not only of the responsible ministries and authorities in the Member States but also of the employees' and employers' organizations in the committees set up for this purpose. CEDEFOP, too, is closely involved in their preparation through its support for the social dialogue in the form of investigations and conferences attended by experts.

The difficult nature of this task even today is clearly illustrated by the relevant CEDEFOP reports and by the synthesis report which point out the different levels of

development, and the varying traditions and customs in the Member States, regions and economic sectors.

When looking beyond the European Community and Europe, particularly to Japan and the United States, one can perceive a typical European identity. This does not take the form of an exaggerated striving for harmony or a constant conflict strategy. It is rather a dialogue aiming to harmonize various interests in order to strive jointly to improve both the living and working conditions of the working population and the competitiveness of companies and the national economies as a whole. The latter can only be successful if the former is guaranteed. And here a key role is played by the development of EC education, vocational training and continuing training policy which takes up the most varied needs. This can, however, only be implemented fruitfully if there is joint involvement of the citizens and those affected by structural changes. It should not be imposed on them from above.

One priority item on the agenda of the EC Commission and its structural fund is still the creation of an environment to encourage the working population, the participants in vocational and continuing training, and their representative bodies to play an active role in vocational and continuing training, in its planning and organization and the creation of the necessary preconditions to guarantee their active participation in the relevant schemes. The new programme of action in the field of adult education offers a spectrum of new opportunities which must, however,

be supplemented by the efforts of the Member States themselves. Only through joint action will it be possible to create the necessary social conditions by 1992 which will ensure that the advancing process of European unification will really benefit everyone and will not be restricted to only part of the population, i.e. to certain target groups, regions and economic sectors.

The Role of the Social Partners in Vocational and Continuing Training

- Synthesis Report -

I. Introduction

1. Initial question

The European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training is an excellent example of the existence of the "social dialogue" at the level of the European Community, and this for more than 12 years. In the articles governing its creation, it is stipulated that CEDEFOP is a Community institution and should provide a joint forum for the parties involved, i.e. particularly for the employers' and employees' organizations. All the Centre's activities are thus geared towards achieving progress in the social dialogue inter alia by means of reports, working conferences, seminars and publications in the field of developing vocational training in the EC. It is in this way that CEDEFOP has to make its scientific and technical contribution. Furthermore, it has to respect the priorities of EC institutions, especially the EC Commission in order to support the development of the Community's vocational training policy.

In order to ensure this agreement and participation, one employer, one employee and one government representative from each of the 12 Member States as well as three delegates from the EC Commission sit on the CEDEFOP

Management Board.

The European employers' and employees' organizations (the Employers' Liaison Committee (ELC) with the EC, and the Union of Industries of the European Community (UNICE) on the one hand, and the European Trade Union Confederation (ETUC) on the other, each provide a coordinator whose task it is to harmonize the opinions of the two parties.

Furthermore, the social partners are involved not only in drawing up work programmes and setting their respective priorities but also in the concrete implementation of projects, investigations and conferences, etc. It is often the case that experts from employers' and employees' organizations are called on for advice in addition to the specialists required.

Formal co-determination or participation of the two sides has been practised in CEDEFOP activities within the framework of the implementation of both the Council Decision on the Comparability of Vocational Training Qualifications of July 1985 and the EC study visit programme for vocational training experts based on the EC Council Resolution of 1983 concerning Vocational Training Policy in the 1980s.

After ten years' working life CEDEFOP decided, within the course of preparing for the three-year guidelines for its 1986-1988 work programme, to study systematically the "role of the social partners in vocational and continuing

training" in order to improve mutual understanding between the organizations and delegations of the Member States and to make a contribution to developing the social dialogue in the field of vocational and continuing training in the EC and its Member States.

2. The questions in the individual studies

In order to describe the current situation, i.e. the institutional framework conditions, traditional instruments and more recent developments in the individual Member States, research centres were commissioned to draw up country reports.

An analysis of existing and historically-rooted structures governing cooperation and/or agreement between the social partners and the public authorities responsible for initial and continuing vocational training (excluding general academically-oriented secondary education and higher education) served as the basis for:

a) conducting an in-depth situational investigation of the central regulations and legislation at regional, local and company level and at single-industry level in each EC Member State, and

b) developing proposals for improving the contents and objectives of the social dialogue at the various levels.

The reports are divided into two sections: a general

analysis and a sectoral analysis.

The general analysis was to be supported wherever possible by the sectoral analysis although the two were basically intended to be complementary.

The general analysis of the historical development, institutional involvement and problem areas also includes a description of the current links between the world of work (employees, employers, industrial sectors and enterprises) and the world of vocational training (in-company, inter-company, school-based training bodies, both in initial and in continuing training, i.e. private, public and independent vocational training bodies).

The analysis investigates, furthermore, the degree and nature of the involvement of the social partners in the development, implementation, administration and control of training programmes including the scale and nature of state intervention within the course of their supervision of this participation:

- the analysis of statutory and framework conditions for collective bargaining (education, labour and social legislation, the nature and scale of the autonomy conceded to the social partners in vocational training as specified in industry-wide collective agreements, sectoral collective agreements and/or typical enterprise-specific agreements), and

- the investigation of the problems encountered in existing approaches to cooperation in vocational training, in particular with regard to the equal distribution of training opportunities amongst the various groups (women, young people, adults, early school leavers, foreigners, etc.) and among the various regions and sectors, and finally

- the description of the different methods of state intervention to promote the social dialogue on the basis of selected situations and regions and/or sectors.

In order to illustrate and to depict faithfully the current situation, the nature and scale of cooperation between the social partners and government bodies were analyzed in three sectors:

- a sector dominated by small and medium-sized enterprises, using the example of the construction industry;

- a sector characterized by modern industrial technology, using the example of the metalworking and electronics industries;

- a sector in which services and the employment of female labour are predominant such as insurance and banking.

Concentrating on specific fields for which the necessary data were available, the intention was to analyze the work place, employment and occupational structures encountered in these sectors, to compare and contrast them for differences in terms of relationships between employees and employers, and to evaluate the respective involvement and participation of employees and their organizations in initial and continuing vocational training and in shaping opportunities for career advancement.

The research activities were usually accompanied at national level by individual ad hoc meetings between the institute(s) under contract and the three Management Board members of the respective country, and at EC level by consultations - organized by CEDEFOP - with the partners under contract from other Member States.

At European level two studies were carried out on the role of employers' and employees' organizations within the EC and within other international organizations (such as OECD and ILO). A further study was conducted from the viewpoint of the trade unions and one from that of the employers' organizations. These 14 reports are now completed and have been published in several languages (cf. bibliography).

This synthesis report drew on the country reports, on the discussions and preliminary results of a CEDEFOP workshop held on this subject in October 1987 (cf. CEDEFOP Flash 8/87), and on the experience and knowledge of the authors who themselves all cooperate on a permanent basis with the

social partners in CEDEFOP. It should not be seen as bringing the debate to a close but is intended to contribute to its continuation and to the elaboration of the first conclusions from this work spanning three years.

3. Objectives and main issues in the synthesis report

The main issues which arise in connection with the development of the role of the social partners in vocational and continuing training in the European Community are:

a) Why is it so important to strive for greater participation of the social partners, i.e. the employers and employees and their organizations, in vocational training issues at all decision-making levels of the company, region, Member State and the EC?

b) Under what conditions can such participation make a positive contribution to the development, realization and institutionalization of a policy for initial and continuing vocational training?

c) What are the major obstacles to greater participation and what traditional patterns of behaviour could possibly hamper such a development?

d) Are there positive examples in some sectors, companies, regions or Member States which could be drawn on to demonstrate good cooperation?

e) What role is played by the state and by public institutions at all levels in order to initiate, support and/or control such participation? Should - e.g. at the various levels - local, regional, national and/or sector-specific initial and continuing vocational training committees be set up with the two sides of industry?

f) To what extent should the companies, employers' organizations, the trade unions and/or the individual employees and workers be involved in contributing financially, in the form of levies, to initial and continuing vocational training?

These are the main issues which were to be studied in depth by a working group in CEDEFOP against the background of the 14 individual reports and which were to serve as the basis for the preliminary conclusions[1]. The most important conclusions from these individual reports have since been published in the 2/88 issue of the journal "Vocational Training" which was specifically dedicated to this subject.

Although the synthesis report is also to identify the most obvious discrepancies amongst the individual Member States, it has no wish to interfere with decisions which have to be taken there. In the future, too, such decisions will be linked to the historically rooted structures and to

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[1] cf. bibliography, p. 100

specific needs and possibilities. EC institutions are not able nor do they want to press for harmonization; this is not their task. An intensive exchange of opinions and experience can, however, help to improve mutual understanding and to ensure that in forthcoming structural changes, account will be taken of the experiences of other Member States. Only in the course of a long process might there be prospects for a certain convergence in developments. This report intends to provide stimuli in that direction.

II. The Current Situation against the Background of Social, Economic and Technological Change

In this chapter an attempt will be made to discuss the attitudes of the trade unions and employers to vocational training as demonstrated in the course of more recent developments. What becomes clear is the still predominantly ambivalent attitude of both sides of industry to vocational training and the somewhat "wait-and-see" stance of public authorities on the development of vocational training.

1. Interest in and commitment to questions of vocational training in the market economies in Europe - inasmuch as this does not concern the training of executives for high and top level positions in public and private enterprises - generally seem to be rather limited. There would be a whole series or reasons or explanations for this but only one reason is to be given here:

   Taking up where fuedalism left off, education systems have developed first and foremost into structures geared to reproducing elite groups and executives; they seek in connection with the dissemination of liberal political ideas to give each and everyone a chance. More utilitarian vocational training entered into at an early age and with the intention of guaranteeing a living was and often still is regarded as providing training for middle management and for

mainly blue-collar workers. Vocational training is still subordinate to education. The integration of education and vocational training, the long-standing goal of many educationalists, could not be achieved to date since more prestige is attached to educational than to vocational training certificates. Vocational training was thus frequently attributed the function of negative selection, i.e. pupils who were not sufficiently "gifted" theoretically were sent to technical-practical training and technical schools, training workshops or enterprises in order "to learn a trade". From that moment on, they hardly had any means of access to the higher echelons of enterprises and public institutions in the state or in society.

2. However, proprietors and managers of firms discovered and promoted vocational training and technical university education very early on and pressed the state to develop corresponding programmes to supplement general secondary and university education. In this way, the requirements of companies in large-scale industry with their ever-increasing division of labour, were to be met by training elite groups of experts to assume positions at various levels in their internal hierarchy. More and more formal career advancement opportunities were created for blue and white-collar workers.
Vocational training thus assumed several functions for the company owners:
- to upgrade the technical/specialist skills of

their workers in order to increase the competitiveness of their companies;

- to legitimize career advancement opportunities for long-serving employees and to secure the loyalty of workers vis-à-vis production goals and the company owner, and
- to guarantee smooth production and services, i.e. control, discipline and management of workers in order to produce sufficient goods of high-enough quality.

3. Initially, workers and their representatives were in two minds about the vocational training provided by enterprises: on the one hand, it enabled many of them to progress to a situation where there was less noise, dirt and heavy physical labour; on the other, they ran the risk of losing the protection of the group, similar-thinking individuals and/or the trade union. They also risked making themselves even more dependent on the good will of the proprietors or their direct superiors and of losing that certain degree of independence allowed to manual workers. Only in exceptional cases did employees work their way up to the highest echelons of the company. These positions continued to be occupied by executives with higher formal training qualifications, who spoke the same language as the proprietors and came from the same bourgeois milieu. The workers who had climbed the career ladder by means of vocational training mostly had the task of mediating between the upper and lower

levels. This function can be illustrated by means of the frequently used statement "The master craftsman or technician should understand the language of the engineer and speak that of the workers".

This ambivalent attitude of workers and their representatives to vocational training still prevails in some cases even today, more in some countries and less in others. The many factions of workers, craftsmen and employees, the many in some cases contradictory developments in individual economic branches and sectors, in public and private industry, in cooperatives and in small and large enterprises, etc. cannot be described in detail here. They do, however, prove that there have to be manifold attitudes to vocational training amongst the organs of the respective employees' organizations.

There is scarcely any other main area of trade-union work which takes in such a broad spectrum of differing opinions. And herein lies one of the main obstacles to the participation of the two sides of industry in vocational training issues.

4. Parallel to and frequently spanning the opposing positions described in points 2 and 3, professional interests have persisted up to now although in some cases there have been new developments. These have to do with the vertical differentiation between individual occupations or economic sectors and with their

horizontal or hierarchical differentiation, e.g. between technicians and engineers.

These interest groups usually work together with the other employees' organizations although they do sometimes cooperate with employers' and/or company representatives.

As a rule, these organizations are especially interested in vocational training and qualification issues, particularly as it is their professional status which guarantees their legitimation. This, in turn, depends to a large extent on the previous training and qualifications of their members.

5. Is vocational training, despite the existence of diverging opinions, a relatively tension-free area for trade unions and employers because the former leave questions of vocational training either to the companies and their representatives or to the professional representatives of their interests? There are many indications that this is the case even today except in German-speaking and Scandinavian countries.

Cultural differences and traditions were the contributory factors to professional ethos being more highly regarded in some countries in Europe than in others. This led trade unions in the various countries to attribute varying degrees of importance to "occupa-

tions" and "vocational training".

6. Some Member States constitute an exception in that the representation of workers' and employees' interests in the trade unions was and still is closely linked with the professional associations. Sectoral organizations or confederations are almost non-existent in such cases. Entire occupations, groups of occupations and their national recognition are still coupled with trade-union membership.

7. The studies commissioned by CEDEFOP revealed, among other things, an apparently close connection between a highly developed vocational training system, the existence of occupations and corresponding training opportunities on the one hand, and the existence of trade unions and the degree of worker unionization on the other. This becomes even clearer when comparing typically "female" occupations with "male" occupations. "Male" occupations are more often based on formal training, which is both organized and recognized by public institutions than are "female" ones. This probably has something to do with the varying degrees to which men and women are organized in trade unions and professional associations. Only recently has there been evidence of a narrowing of the gap between the sexes in terms of unionization.

8. The social dialogue in the vocational training field is mostly limited to the programmes which are not run

by schools or companies, and more specifically to elements touching on labour market policy. Participation or even co-determination in school-based education (including vocational or technical education) is only practised in a few cases and/or Member States.

The country which has progressed furthest along this path is France. Prior to the drawing up of state regulations and/or legislation, the two sides of industry have a say in the goals and contents of skilled blue and white-collar worker training, which is mainly school-based, as well as in technician training (including training leading to the technical and vocational "baccalauréats").

9. In recent times, vocational training, the renewal of the link between education and training, the connection between learning and work and between physical and intellectual work have assumed increasing importance. The contributory factors are the pressure of social change, the improved training potential of growing numbers in the work force, and economic and technological changes coupled with persisting mass unemployment. The responsible parties in political and industrial circles seem to have recognized this fact. In many cases, however, the necessary conclusions have still to be drawn regarding the development of education and training systems.

10. Although the vocational training systems in the various Member States are organized very differently and although this leads to problems when it comes to comparative analysis, a host of common features could be identified with regard both to their development and to the social dialogue. Yes, there seems to be a problematic European Community state of affairs which might prompt action to move towards increased harmonization of the contents and methods of this dialogue in the individual Member States.

The special features of the various vocational training systems identified in a detailed analysis merely appear to be an obstacle to such an hypothesis. This analysis does indeed reveal that there are different, specific framework conditions within which the vocational training systems have, on the one hand, taken shape and, on the other, have developed solutions to the growing problematic European Community state of affairs.

Harmonization neither can nor should it be imposed from above by the EC institutions. As demonstrated in the following chapters, it will be prompted rather through developments at company, local and regional levels based on joint orientations and the increasing harmonization of framework conditions in the EC. What is more, EC policy in general and its structural fund in particular play a role in the development of such orientations, which should not be underes-

timated.

11. The studies on the Member States also make clear that many local or regional programmes and measures were prompted by prior discussions between the social partners and the public authorities. These discussions usually focus on questions of labour market policy, qualification requirements and the social and economic structural problems of the population and the corresponding region. In this connection, all Member States pay particular attention to problems linked with training and employing specific groups, e.g. women, early school leavers and migrant workers, etc.

The discussions of the social partners do focus mainly on questions of labour market policy, although they are also taking a more active interest in matters of educational, social and economic policy, especially as the personnel and staff recruitment strategies of public and private companies and their working time strategy have repercussions on these policy areas. Thus, for example the prolongation of compulsory general education and the extension of initial vocational training in many Member States can be seen as a consequence of the labour market crisis and the ensuing discussions between the social partners and public authorities.

12. As long as there was a balance between supply of and

demand for initial training qualifications, there was no need for an intensive dialogue between the social partners. It was only with the appearance of the transitional problems of young people, the (re)integration problems of women, but also the problems of work reorganization arising from the introduction of new technologies, that a desire was expressed for the advice and assistance of the social partners in solving these problems. Initially, the problems of the youth labour market were to the fore. Recently, they have been joined by continuing training, retraining and further training issues. The appearance of these new problems is an indication of the long-standing neglect of the difficulties in balancing training and employment systems, which are again heading for a crisis. Companies are no longer assuming sole responsibility for continuing vocational training; it is increasingly being regarded as a component in state labour market and structural policy. Here, the social dialogue is being assigned a key role. At the same time, education and initial training systems are open to question as it is possible to supplement, correct or revise their results in a continuing training system accessible to everyone.

13. The increased participation of the social partners in questions of labour market, vocational training and continuing training policies is taking place against the background of the structural and economic

challenges which face the companies and responsible bodies in the developing internal market, and of the growing pressure of competition from Japan, South-East Asia and North America. This increasingly shows that the quality of goods and services, in particular, is a function of the qualifications of the working population. Public and private enterprises are altering their work organization accordingly, and here a considerably more important role is being attributed to workers' qualifications than in the past. At the same time, however, many individuals who do not meet these stiffer requirements more because of the lack of any or simply inadequate initial training and continuing training opportunities and less because of their individual wrong decisions, run the risk of being forced onto the fringes of the labour market and society. The danger of the appearance of a "have and have-not" society is beginning to rear its head. This has to be offset by political programmes and schemes within the training and employment systems. Here, the social dialogue is of course playing an important role but other, especially social aspects, are coming to the fore.

Guaranteeing equal opportunities in education, training and employment - a goal in the early 1970s, is today once again a subject for discussion because of very concrete problems. Meeting this challenge is a task for all social forces, not just for the social partners.

III. Analysis of the Situation in the Member States

1. On the participation of workers and their organizations in plants and parent companies

The company level and/or the level of the companies and their confederations is also the basis for the participation of both sides at other levels of intervention on vocational and continuing training issues.

For that reason, we deliberately began the analysis with this subject.

Examples drawn from various Member States are used to illustrate the different approaches adopted in the individual states themselves or ones which span national boundaries. This method enables us to remain within the limits of the report. It was not intended that this report should replace the country reports (cf. bibliography), short summaries of which are available in all EC languages.

Belgium

The company management plans and organizes the in-company training of its workers. The role of workers and trade unions is mostly limited to receiving information and to analyzing critically and monitoring the implementation of initial and continuing training. The works council and staff committee, as the responsible bodies of the workers, can assume these tasks. The scale of their participation differs according to the size of the enterprise, the conventions of the respective economic sector and whether

the enterprise is a member of certain employees' and employers' organizations or remains independent of such bodies.

In providing training places for young people under 30, companies fulfil their statutory obligations. The trade unions monitor this procedure to ensure that these training places are not given to workers who could obtain a normal job, i.e. they want to reserve these places first and foremost for less well-qualified young people and to ensure that the training character is maintained and that part-time training courses are offered which are linked with off-the-job training.

For small and medium-sized enterprises (e.g. in the crafts sector), there are more or less traditional apprentice training schemes and further training opportunities for people setting up a new business. There are central further training institutes for small and medium-sized enterprises which are run by the corresponding professional associations. There is no involvement of workers at company level or in these further training institutions. Control is exercised by the responsible ministries, particularly when they provide the financial backing for the training programmes. Otherwise, the respective professional associations and company owners in the "small to medium-sized" category are more or less autonomous.

Italy

The analyses of in-company worker participation in Italy

indicate that in small and medium-sized enterprises mainly issues such as wages, working hours and job security are dealt with, and hardly any issues to do with vocational and continuing training, work organization or the introduction of new technologies. There is a gap in the contributions made by large and smaller enterprises. In the former, vocational training and work organization issues play a major role. This certainly has to do with trade union presence as trade unions are encountered more often in large companies. Here, there is a whole series of bodies and training centres in which extensive participation by employees' organizations is ensured. This applies in particular to public enterprises such as "Italsider", "Italtel"" and "ENI" associated enterprises such as "Lanerossi", etc. In some cases they have drawn up extensive company agreements as a response to current restructuring operations made necessary by the introduction of new technologies. These agreements also contain the regulations concerning the vocational and continuing training programmes for the workers. In many cases the number of workers who are to undergo training is specified and these agreements contain rulings on the contents and length of courses. A number of these further and continuing training measures is financed from state funds, including financial assistance from the European Social Fund. Finally, many agreements have been drawn up in order to enable workers to attend - under the so-called 150-hour law - off-the-job further training programmes during working hours.

What is noticeable in the case of Italy is that at company level there is no legal framework for staff committees or works councils. They exist de facto in many larger companies; in most cases, however, it is the trade unions and their company organizations who nominate the spokesmen and delegates for the committees responsible for the different tasks. There do not appear to be any organs which are elected by all members of a company, i.e. the unionized and non-unionized, which are active on behalf of the work force of that company in all areas involving work and qualification conditions.

Apprentice training in Italy - although it is still widespread in an economy dominated by small and medium-sized enterprises - was and still is neglected by the trade unions because it is thought to be outdated and an instrument of exploitation. This neglect seems to be symptomatic and goes hand in hand with a certain lack of interest in qualification issues and questions of controlling training matters. The main emphasis in Italian trade unions up to now has been on upgrading the unskilled or less skilled workers in respect of their remuneration, social status and position in the firm and this for the most part independent of formal education and/or training qualifications. The acquisition of the latter is still more or less left to the public training institutions whereas in-company schemes do not extend beyond short-term induction or retraining.

At the same time, this means that company flexibility

strategies can only be offset by formal classification concepts, which in the long run would lead to a dequalification of the workers and a deregulation of work organization. Moreover, the company agreements mentioned above do not usually extend beyond induction or retraining in the new tasks of the respective company. Recognition of the newly acquired qualifications by other companies is not guaranteed with the obvious implications for the mobility and flexibility of the workers.

Netherlands

In formal terms, there are indeed extensive participation opportunities for works councils in the field of vocational training and qualification of workers at company level. In reality, however, these works councils seem to have hardly anything at all to do with the actual issues. They are regarded as being the territory of employers and as being closely linked with work organization. Even fewer participation opportunities seem to be open to the trade unions than to the works councils. In recent times, because of technological and economic challenges and the related shifts from occupation-oriented qualifications towards new company-specific ones, awareness is growing amongst both the trade unions and the works councils. This may in future prompt new forms of cooperation and/or participation as long as the employers are prepared to play ball, and there seem to be some signs that this is the case.

In larger companies, too, which recently drew up internal

agreements on providing a specific number of training places for apprentices, the trade unions or works councils were, in some cases, much involved in the lead-up to the agreements themselves but scarcely involved at all in the implementation phase of such decisions. The company schools or training officers in the individual companies enforce the corresponding decisions practically without consulting the works councils at all.

In small companies in which apprentice training still plays an important role, the company owners still reserve the right to make all decisions on training issues. This contrasts sharply with efforts on all other levels to make vocational training a subject for joint consideration by trade unions and employers.

Increased participation has been achieved with regard to relevant social aspects e.g. concerning the introduction of new technologies. In the corresponding company agreements, the question of retraining also plays a certain role. In this area, larger companies and public authorities have extensive arrangements for worker participation, such as project groups, user involvement and participative management.

United Kingdom

The United Kingdom is certainly one of the countries with the largest number of variations in the participation of the social partners at company level. Each individual company has its own special traditions in dealing with

trade unions and their representatives. Only in very rare cases do we find works councils or staff committees. Negotiations as a rule are conducted directly with trade union representatives. In respect of vocational and continuing training it can be said that with the exception of traditional apprenticeships, which have fallen in number in the last few years, this field is looked upon as being the domain of the employers. Only in a few cases, mostly during actual conflict situations, e.g. within the framework of changes in work organization and/or the introduction of new technologies, do consultations take place with the employees and/or the trade unions.

For the above reasons, it is not possible to speak of the institutionalization of the social dialogue at company level. In the last few years Conservative governments in particular have dismantled existing forms of cooperation. In some cases this was linked with the closing down of the mostly sectoral Industrial Training Boards, ITBs. These boards are not found in all sectors. Here, even today there is still a certain willingness at company level to cooperate on both questions of initial training and the Youth Training Scheme, YTS, and on questions of continuing vocational training. This willingness has also been prompted by the way in which in-company training is financed. By far the greatest share is provided within the framework of state programmes and only a limited share by the companies themselves.

Federal Republic of Germany

In the Federal Republic of Germany the opportunities for worker participation are clearly stipulated in a special "Betriebsverfassungsgesetz" (Company Constitutional Law) and for large companies in the "Mitbestimmungsgesetz" (Co-determination Law) of 1976. The coal and steel sector has a regulation which extends beyond the Codetermination Law of 1976. In formal terms, this provides for extensive worker participation in the field of vocational and continuing training. However, owing to other priorities and the workload of employees' representatives, these opportunities are often not exploited to the full. Participation, therefore, often amounts to nothing more than a pure control function regarding the selection of participants or the implementation of vocational and continuing training in line with a company's interests. In a few sectors (construction and horticulture, for example) opportunities for worker participation extend beyond this thanks to the existence of a jointly financed and administered sectoral fund.

In large companies and in public or publicly-controlled enterprises, participation is also more widespread than in small enterprises in which the degree of unionization is low and works councils do not always exist. However, efforts are being made there as well to practice a cooperative leadership style, particularly as small companies are over-represented in initial training programmes under the dual system. In the Federal Republic of Germany, workers generally have extensive opportunities

for participation in the selection of trainees and their promotion to permanent status, but not in the implementation and organization of initial or continuing training. More recently, a growing number of company agreements or industry-wide collective agreements have been drawn up which take in continuing training. In these agreements opportunities for participation have been more firmly anchored as well.

2. <u>On participation at local or regional levels</u>

At local level in some countries there is a well-developed structure of chambers or labour office committees in which employees' representatives play an advisory role (chambers) or have an opportunity to participate (in the labour office committees). There is no other Member State in which the chambers of industry and commerce or crafts play such an important role in vocational training as in the Federal Republic of Germany. This is because these chambers have been commissioned by the public authorities in respect of initial vocational training and, to an increasing extent, in respect of continuing vocational training to implement and control training both in enterprises and under the dual system. Moreover, they have been asked to conduct examinations and issue vocational training certificates. A similarly extensive delegation of responsibility from the public authorities to employer-linked institutions has only taken place in recent years in the United Kingdom within the framework of the Youth Training Scheme. This scheme is mostly implemented by the companies in the form of 1 to 2 years' basic vocational on-the-job training.

In France, the Netherlands and other Member States local cooperation centres for the education, training and employment of young people have been set up in response to the problems encountered in the transition from school to work. In these centres, a whole series of responsible authorities offer guidance, information and placement services in cooperation with the social partners. In some cases they also balance supply of and demand for training, continuing training and employment and can be seen as supplementing the labour offices or career guidance centres in the narrower sense.

At regional level there are often, in addition to the competent administration, advisory committees on planning initial and continuing vocational training activities in which the social partners are involved. Italy and Belgium as well as the Federal Republic of Germany and Spain, i.e. countries with a federal structure or with decentralized responsibility for vocational and continuing training, often have quite extensive opportunities for participating in the legislative and administrative sides of vocational training policy for the respective region. In other countries, committees of this kind are more closely linked with the district labour offices, for example in Denmark, the Netherlands and Portugal. In special expert committees proposals for submission to public authorities are prepared on sector-specific matters, too.

For some years now, many Member States have been involved

in improving the infrastructure at local and regional levels. It is on these levels that analyses can best be made of structural conditions taking in concrete social and economic needs. It is here that any imbalances which may arise can best be corrected. They have also recognized that the regional and local levels play an important intermediary role both in the implementation and also the influencing of decisions which have been taken at national or EC levels and which concern the framework conditions, under which initial and continuing training activities can be developed at local and regional levels. Just as on the company level, the social dialogue has not been sufficiently institutionalized or structured at the regional and local levels. Here, the necessary framework conditions and statutory regulations are still missing.

The role of collective agreements, educational leave agreements and/or company agreements for larger companies or administrations should not be underestimated. Their effectiveness also depends on the existence of a corresponding infrastructure.

3. <u>On worker participation at national level</u>

Whereas at company, local or regional levels the differences between the Member States are still marked, depending on the distribution of responsibilities and strength of the organizations concerned, it seems that at national level a certain alignment in the practices of consultation and worker participation is taking place.

This applies especially to questions of labour market and vocational training policy in the narrower sense, but less to general vocational policy issues which are normally regarded as the territory of the cultural and/or education authorities. At best, teachers' associations and/or teachers' trade unions are involved, i.e. the bodies in which teachers have organized themselves. In the case of the former, i.e. in the field of vocational training, the industrial associations, guilds and/or craft associations on the one hand and the industrial trade unions on the other - organized as they are in national confederations - are the counterparts for political circles and public authorities. Depending on the traditions of the workers' movement in the respective Member States, we find more politically-oriented factional trade unions or pluralistically organized branch trade unions with corresponding confederations.

In the Member States in which factional trade unions prevail, we find at best central coordination centres but scarcely any powerful trade union confederations as the counterparts to the central employers' organizations. This does not apply of course to the central organizations of these factional trade unions.

Concerning general questions of social, economic and labour market policy, in which vocational training constitutes an important element, many Member States have tripartite planning and guidance and/or consultation mechanisms, e.g. in the form of economic and social councils which are set

up by the respective governments and/or national parliaments responsible for structuring the social dialogue between politicians, administrators and the employees' and employers' organizations. Such concerted action can be found for example in France, Italy, the Netherlands and Spain. The other Member States have less formalized structures; this does not mean, however, that no such important discussions in political terms take place prior to legislation. The counterpart to these bodies at EC level is the Economic and Social Committee, which is reported on in the studies by Lemke and Castin.

There is not one Member State in which the two sides of industry are not given a chance to voice their opinions on important draft legislation in the field of labour market and vocational training policies. In some cases, they can make considerable use of their rights to participate. The degree to which one side or the other can exercise more influence depends not only on its objective strength (number of members, and manpower and capital resources) but also of course on the political climate and on the question of which party/parties hold(s) the reins of government.

In general, trade unions and employees find this more difficult than the employers and their organizations. This is because the latter can second more experts for discussions, meetings and hearings, they can organize campaigns with the help of the media, and conduct investigations and opinion polls, etc. They do not need to set up a strike fund and find it easier to delegate leadership tasks. The

trade unions often have only a small number of functionaries and research institutions to whom they can delegate central tasks, particularly as their main task must be the so-called grass roots work which aims to ensure the support of their members and correct representation of their interests. They do, however, have the advantage that it is easier to group together their common interests than it is for the employers with their different factions such as small and medium-sized enterprises, large companies, banks and the retail trade, craft enterprises and industry, etc. The concept trade unions have of themselves and their power of representation, which centres on the concept of paid, mostly industrial employment are, however, under pressure at present because:

- the era of expanding large-scale industries is either coming to an end or the companies concerned can make do with steadily dwindling numbers of employees;

- a certain expansion is taking place but only in private services and white-collar occupations, areas in which the degree of worker unionization is by tradition very limited;

- the sons of workers are becoming increasingly impervious to the influences exerted through their fathers' occupations and they accept less readily their fathers' trade union affiliations, and

- the traditional industrial worker is being edged out more and more by skilled workers, technicians and highly qualified workers.

Furthermore, there are new social movements such as the women's movement, the ecological movement, etc. which cannot be directly linked with work or trade unions. Finally, in times of mass unemployment the trade unions are weakened as they can be more influenced by employers and their organizations wielding the availability of jobs argument.

At the same time, the new forms and means of communication based on new media and new information technologies are rejected by many trade unions, whereas the employers' organizations adopt them without any major reservations. These new information technologies and their application play an especially important role in initial and continuing vocational training. The "what" and "how" factors will also determine whether it will be possible to achieve both solidarity amongst the workers and man-oriented production and services or whether there will be a desolidarizing individualization and isolation of the individual with the accompanying dangers for social unity and the balance of power.

4. Sector-specific organizations

In this chapter we shall evaluate the results of the case studies on the participation of employers' and employees' organizations in vocational and continuing training at the

level of the economic sectors/branches. From the preceding remarks it can be concluded that the social dialogue on training issues is influenced to a marked degree by the existing framework conditions for industrial relations and vocational training systems. In each individual Member State these structures are based on specific historical developments and the related institutions. Special forms of relations and expectations and/or attitudes have crystallized on the one hand; on the other they constitute the basis for firmly established interests which in turn contribute to a certain institutional anchoring of the structures. The systems of industrial relations and vocational training are not inter-related in the same way everywhere. In some Member States the principal figures in both systems are identical, e.g. in the dual system of initial vocational training in the Federal Republic of Germany. In other countries vocational training is controlled and organized exclusively by the state or employers (e.g. YTS in the United Kingdom) and in others a vocational training system is currently being set up, e.g. in Portugal and Greece.

At this point we do not intend to enter into any further detail on the differences between the systems in the various countries. We merely wish to point them out because in practice the existence and nature of these differences considerably influence the conditions for the development of the "social dialogue", its form and its contents. In countries in which dialogue rather than conflicts govern general worker/employer relations, it is

relatively easy to incorporate vocational training issues. Where this is not the case, as in all other areas, vocational training issues quickly become "politicized".

In itself vocational and continuing training is no more neutral than any of the other traditional components in industrial relations. In the same way, it can be observed that where the organizations play a role in vocational training systems and where they have acquired the necessary expert knowledge and skills, they are effectively involved in general issues such as the reorganization of vocational training and the creation and extension of continuing training, etc. Thus, they help to make quantitative and qualitative improvements to vocational training programmes and can meet the special needs of firms, individual employees and society as a whole.

Although these comments are very general, they are still extremely important since they prove that if there is to be effective participation, then there has to be a general understanding of the initial situation. This is particularly the case when recommendations, proposals or demands for the further development of vocational training are to be discussed.

The situation becomes even more complicated when we consider that the Member States differ not only in their industrial relations and the structure of their vocational training systems but that in each Member State there are major differences arising from the economic or industrial

structure. In the country reports, the authors made an in-depth study of three sectors: the construction industry, the metalworking industry and banking (cf. also p. 9 in the introduction). These sectors differ not only in the range of goods or services they offer but also in respect of their employment and occupation structures. Thus, they have specific traditions in industrial relations and vocational training, which need not necessarily correspond to typical national characteristics. Despite some obvious variations, these sectors often share more common features spanning the Member States than different sectors in one and the same Member State. For example, the trade unions and employers' organizations in the metalworking industry in most Member States are frequently regarded as the spearhead in negotiations on national agreements, when these have to do with vocational training, too.

In banking, which is generally dominated by a small number of large banks, vocational training is very much oriented towards the needs of the individual enterprises. This is coupled with limited representation and a low level of trade union organization. In the construction industry, too, there are transnational similarities in the Member States. One reason for this is that the working conditions and the heavy dependence on economic fluctuations often have a negative effect on the motivation of young people to look for training places and jobs in the construction industry. The general attractiveness of construction occupations can be increased by setting up and extending existing vocational training schemes; and here there is a

certain convergence between employers' and employees' interests.

The country reports prove that the social dialogue has been intensified in all three sectors in almost all Member States, although this intensification is relative and has to do with the varying initial situations. Where there was no dialogue until quite recently, a dialogue has now begun; where the dialogue was limited to the vocational training of young people, it has been extended to continuing training. Where vocational training issues were restricted to those directly affected, they have been widened and representatives of the two sides of industry have become involved. The forms and contents of this dialogue and the role of public authorities in education and labour market policy, are described in the following chapters as are the consequences for the responsibilities of the various persons involved and for vocational training and its development. We now wish to examine the forces behind the developments in each of the above-mentioned sectors. Without oversimplifying the situation, we can differentiate between three kinds of forces that are relevant here:

- the involvement of sectoral organizations in initiatives at legislative level;
- joint initiatives of sectoral organizations to solve their specific sectoral problems;
- the behaviour of sectoral organizations vis-à-vis developments in individual companies.

4.1 On the involvement of sectoral organizations in legislative initiatives

Almost all new initiatives at national level are taken exclusively by and in the individual sectors. The authors of the Dutch investigation explain e.g. that the confederations of the employers and trade unions have reached agreement on the basis of the report by an expert group and the ensuing government recommendations to strengthen the practical side of initial vocational training. They recommended, again unanimously, that the sectoral organizations incorporate vocational training into collective bargaining and set up joint self-managed training funds to finance vocational training. These recommendations have found expression in many sectoral collective agreements.

In the Federal Republic of Germany the sectoral organizations were integrated into the reform process of vocational training and training regulations as a consequence of the Vocational Training Act of 1969. New training occupations were created and old ones were combined or restructured.

These examples illustrate that new initiatives can stem both from political circles and from associations or education authorities. All the same, it is not always clear whether the activities of the sectoral organizations are more an answer to national initiatives or a reply to developments and changing conditions in the sectors or the industry itself. In any case, all the parties concerned seem to agree that the roots of the many new initiatives

can be traced back to the fact that a fundamental change seems to be taking place in the attitude to vocational training as a whole. This is most obvious in the Italian report; the authors stress that vocational training is no longer a buffer against unemployment or an instrument to balance supply and demand of jobs but an investment which will increasingly influence the productivity of companies and the sectors as a whole. Their development and survival will depend more and more on the qualifications of their employees. This change in attitude was sparked off by the growing competition to which firms are exposed in all sectors of the economy.

Consequently, this pressure of competition has led to a change in awareness at national level, earlier in some Member States and later in others. Those Member States and sectors in industry which were quick to recognize public responsibility for efficiently run vocational training systems, seem to be better equipped to deal with forthcoming structural changes. Both sides of industry have highly qualified staff.

4.2 Joint initiatives of sectoral organizations to solve sector-specific problems

Naturally, the role of sectoral organizations, be they trade unions or employers' organizations in the respective sector, is particularly important when it comes to problems affecting the overall sector. They are particularly active when the pressure of competition is especially high (cf. the introductory remarks in this chapter). Such pressure

can stem both from the goods or services side or from the labour market conditions. The construction industry is subject to pressure on the labour market in most Member States, whereas the metalworking and banking industries face more problems with competition in goods or services.

The authors of several country reports stressed that since the beginning of the 1970s new approaches to solutions had been jointly adopted, i.e. by trade unions and employers' organizations in the construction industry to make it more attractive to newcomers and to overcome structural problems. New vocational training paths and redistribution systems had been developed, and the qualification level of young people in the construction industry had been raised in general, and this applies to almost all EC Member States. At European level, too, and within the EC, the organizations of both sides of industry had come together in joint committees, exchanged experience (cf. reports by F. Castin and H. Lemke) and discussed new ways of tackling problems.

There is no such cooperation either in the metalworking or banking sectors.

In banking and insurance the situation at national level, too, is often very varied. Vocational training at the lowest levels of the hierarchy has only been formalized in very few Member States. Training is often conducted very much within the company and is monitored by the banks themselves. State recognized training regulations exist in

only a few Member States. More recently, however, corresponding agreements between the social partners, e.g. in the Netherlands and in Italy, have led to a certain generalization of training in this sector. The Netherlands has set up special training schemes for apprentices and in Italy the proportion of off-the-job and inter-company training weeks has been specified.

In contrast to the banking sector, which has hardly ever been confronted with labour market problems, the metalworking sector is characterized by the existence of labour market problems, goods and product development problems and the corresponding pressure of competition.

Since the 1960s many Member States have been facing labour market problems which have led the trade unions to raise questions concerning the quality of work, working conditions and work organization. The employers' organizations and enterprises have seen the need to answer these questions by taking the necessary action.

This pressure has not proved enough, however, to lead to new solutions on a broader basis to questions of qualifications, vocational and continuing training or retraining of the working population. It is only in the last few years with the increased pressure of competition in the production of goods (quality of products, productivity, adapting to new markets, new production methods), coupled with the realization of the need for the extensive introduction of new information technologies, that a profound change could

be observed. Experiments and the ensuing extension of new forms of work organization and the related radical changes in the personnel policy of companies called for a change, too, in vocational and continuing training policy. The attitudes of entrepreneurs to vocational training and the qualifications of workers have also changed fundamentally as a result. For their core labour force they not only look for well-trained skilled workers, they also expect their work force at all levels of the hierarchy to show increased willingness to learn and undergo continuing training. At the same time, those workers who do not (are unable to) meet these requirements are pushed onto the fringes or into unemployment.

One motive for cooperation is the attempt to redistribute more evenly the financial burden amongst the enterprises in one sector by asking the state for financial assistance on the basis of an agreement with the respective trade union. Reticence on the part of the public authorities frequently leads to agreements being concluded between the two sides of industry and to extensive self-administration of training and its funding by means of sectoral or industry-wide collective agreements.

The evaluation of these approaches differs from Member State to Member State depending on their effectiveness, endurance, etc. Whereas e.g. the German authors see these agreements as having a stabilizing effect and stress the extensive independence of short-term political decision-making processes, the Italian authors use the reverse

arguments. Their criticism is that such agreements often lead to short-term solutions and vocational training thus becomes highly politicized. This may, of course, have to do with the different character of trade unions in the two countries.

There are, however, still fundamental differences in attitudes depending on whether we are dealing with initial vocational training, e.g. in the form of apprenticeships or with continuing training. Whereas initial training, alternance training, in-company training and the apprenticeship training of young people are relatively uncontroversial components in agreements and joint efforts by the two sides of industry, continuing vocational training is still very much the territory of company management or the employers' organizations or chambers. Denmark, France and to a certain extent the Netherlands, which have recently undertaken new steps in this field, are exceptions in this, however.

On-the-job continuing training of employees is still mainly regarded as the territory of employers. They regard it as a purely company affair. For that reason, a transparent qualification structure, modular systems and transferable vocational training certificates are often still lacking in the continuing training sector. Continuing training efforts of firms are, therefore, usually only of importance when companies switch to new production methods or products. They concentrate solely on schemes to adapt workers' skills to the new work organization and/or

new work places. More extensive retraining programmes and recognized continuing training programmes are usually offered by the state or by publicly-sponsored continuing training centres set up for this purpose outside the companies. The division of continuing training provision into two more or less entirely separate entities is being challenged more and more from all sides. Labour market problems have led to increased readiness not just in the metalworking sector to place continuing training on a more formalized basis, be this by means of collective agreements or agreements between state authorities and the sectors or regions. There is also a desire to improve this provision in terms of quality and, more particularly, to provide more schemes in order to promote the equal distribution of opportunities between poorly and highly qualified workers, between those in and out of work and between depressed and thriving sectors and regions.

4.3 The behaviour of sectoral organizations vis-à-vis developments at the level of the individual company

The role and function of sectoral organizations, their importance and opportunities for influence depend not only on the number of their membership but also on the willingness of the firms and workers in a given sector to become involved in vocational training issues even when these extend beyond the interests of the individual company or person. Sectoral organizations must be in a position to state clearly that the interests of the individual enterprises and workers can only then be implemented if they are incorporated into the various levels of political

intervention. At the same time, they must always refer to the specific requirements of the enterprises.

Trade unions only then take on importance at company level when they can exercise influence on the employees' representative body within a firm, i.e. the works councils or staff committees and when the latter can draw on legally guaranteed participation rights.

Generally speaking, works councils are at best informed and/or consulted by management, and this only in the case of issues where the management is legally bound to so do. Here, there are major differences between the Member States. It is only at local, regional or sectoral levels that trade union representatives appear on the scene as serious negotiating partners for the employers. Questions of vocational and continuing training are only very rarely compulsory subjects for consultations and/or information. They are not necessarily seen as having priority by either of the two sides (cf. Section II). As there are only a few sectoral collective agreements in this field, the sectoral organizations have little scope for participation.

In the banking sector, where the qualifications of skilled employees are very closely linked to ability to compete, the companies and/or individual houses are less inclined to participate in sector-wide cooperation, which may also lead to tension at this level. In such cases, trade unions are forced to limit themselves to reactions, innovations, organizational changes, and the introduction of new

technologies. They can hardly ever play an active role in their actual implementation. Control over the implementation of regulations in the companies is often denied them, too, unless they are represented on the staff committees or works councils, and this is probably only the case in larger branches of banks.

By way of conclusion, it can be said - and this very probably applies to all sectors - that the sectoral organizations are as strong as their grass roots in the enterprises, and in the case of employers and/or employees, as strong as the sum of the individual companies. In firms where there are opportunities for worker participation, the sectoral organizations on both sides are also prepared to cooperate with each other, provided the companies have attained a certain level of worker organization. As mentioned previously, the willingness to cooperate is still relatively widespread in the field of initial vocational training for young people, particularly in alternance schemes but not in the field of continuing training, which has still not been satisfactorily organized under bipartite or tripartite (with the participation of public offices) agreements. Exceptions to this can be found in France and Belgium, which do have such agreements.

5. The various forms of social dialogue

If one were to attempt to establish a typology of the different participation opportunities and rights in the Member States, then four different categories could be applied:

a) the "geographical" level at which the social dialogue takes place:
company, local, regional, national and international, whereby the companies themselves could be broken down into further levels on which negotiations (may) take place: individual company and/or branch office, parent company, concern, multinational enterprise;

b) the "educational" level at which participation takes or can take place:
primary level, secondary level I, secondary level II, higher education and continuing training and/or the "vocational training level":
- vocational education including technical schools;
- alternance training, including apprenticeships;
- group training workshops, training centres, training cooperatives set up and financed by several firms, etc.;
- in-company initial and continuing training;
- vocational and work experience programmes in companies;
- commercial or nonprofit initial and continuing training programmes sponsored by various bodies;

c) the institutional and/or legal level on which dialogue takes place:
- in the form of joint committees on which both parties are represented on an equal footing,

- in the form of tripartite bodies taking in the responsible public offices,
- in the form of cooperation associations taking in further organizations and/or partners such as parents' representatives, representatives of participants, trainers and teachers, youth organizations, welfare associations, etc.;

d) and finally the contents level in participation which decides according to institutional and legal preconditions on the scale and level of participation:
it extends from information, consultations, negotiations and counselling to participation and/or self-administration by the social partners.

In a number of Member States we can find all these forms and levels of participation, although the degree of intensity and realization in vocational and continuing training practice varies.

Those countries which have a highly developed vocational and continuing training system are the ones with the most highly advanced social dialogue (D, DK, F, NL), even although they may still face problems with practical implementation. In other Member States, the participation especially of trade unions and employees' representatives has not yet been guaranteed on most levels. Frequently, there is a complete lack of interest on one, the other or both sides in vocational training matters. There is

frequently a comparatively strict delineation of the spheres of influence of the respective sides, and a certain barricading-off of different sub-systems of vocational training is the result.

More recently, however, the legislative bodies have been increasingly willing - and this in all Member States - to consult not just one but both sides of industry before drawing up new initiatives and programmes or reforms. Scarcely any new programmes are being approved without the substantial involvement of the social partners. Mostly, the responsible public offices take their decisions after a consensus has been reached between both sides, particularly when it is a question of training programmes which can only be implemented with the assistance of the companies.

The responsible public offices frequently only become active when pressure is exerted by one or the other side. Sometimes, however, a consensus is only reached between the two sides when politicians threaten to go it alone in the form of administrative standards and or tax levies. One side's success in an individual case - be it the trade union, the employers' organization or the public authorities - depends in the case of legislative measures not only on the kind and form of participation but also on the proximity of the organizations concerned to political parties, other professional associations and to the authorities themselves. In all Member States the social partners have privileged access to one or the other major or minor political orientation and/or party organization.

Very often, it is this access which determines - even independent of the strength of the organization concerned - whether or not moves will be successful; this is of course connected with the strength of the respective party and whether or not it holds the reins of government or participates therein.

In a series of Member States the links between the social partners and the political parties are very strong. Trade unions with such links are described as factional. Similarly, strong links on a less formal scale can be found between employers' organizations and certain parties, although this does not necessarily mean that they are less effective. In Mediterranean countries the trade unions are generally more closely linked with political parties than in northern Member States with the exception of the United Kingdom. In the UK, tasks are more clearly divided between the two sides. In the former group, vocational training issues are thus more highly "politicized", i.e. in connection with other controversial questions such as tariff issues, work organization and grading in salary scales, etc. In the case of the latter, open confrontation in the field of vocational and continuing training is usually avoided and attempts are made to reach viable compromises.

In all Member States the question arises as to how representative the organizations are. Whereas this is relatively clear at company and sectoral levels - depending

of course on the degree of organization, i.e. the number of members of the respective association -, it is more obscure at the "geographical" levels or levels of administrative intervention (local, regional, etc.). Here, it is frequently the case that other interest groups such as parent, teacher and pupil associations, etc. have to be drawn into the dialogue. This means on the one hand that conflicts with the representatives of the various interests groups can frequently be avoided and on the other that the decision-making paths become much longer because a host of consultations have to take place before a consensus can be reached and/or a decision taken by the administration.

In the field of vocational and continuing training, as already stressed on several occasions, the social partners are called on by the governments of all Member States at national level in one way or another to take part in the preparation of new programmes, regulations, laws, i.e. in setting standards. When putting these standards into practice, however, both sides are often left out in the cold. Only in those Member States which have strong company and sector-wide participation rights and the necessary institutions are the two sides also involved in the day-to-day administration, evaluation and implementation of training programmes, particularly in the case of alternance training, and in labour market initial and continuing training programmes to combat unemployment, and in in-company further training and induction schemes.

In Mediterranean countries, the public authorities are

often inclined or obliged, more or less independently of the respective associations, to implement their programmes. This does, however, mean that the adoption by companies and private industry of such measures and programmes only succeeds on a limited scale. Thus their effectiveness is restricted from the very outset, particularly as their efficiency is hardly ever monitored. The involvement of the two sides in the realization of a programmes does lead to a kind of self-evaluation which is often more effective than monitoring by state controllers, particularly when participation is guaranteed at company and local or regional levels.

Whereas the training programmes carried out by employment authorities in all Member States are controlled on a tri-partite basis and are in some cases self-administered, the regular, school-based programmes run by the Ministers of Education or Cultural Affairs are very rarely implemented by bipartite or tripartite bodies. Here, participation is restricted to the setting of standards; their actual implementation is undertaken by the educational authorities independently, without the direct involvement of these organizations. Only private education and the strongly decentralized school-based vocational training centres have boards and councils on which local interest groups are usually represented, such as large companies and their representatives in the corresponding districts.

Representatives from the two sides in industry, the crafts or service sectors are often invited to act on the

examining boards for the chambers, vocational training centres, technical schools, etc. This participation has a long tradition and can be traced back to the guilds or craft associations or their successors which exist even today in some Member States.

In the northern Member States of the EC these traditions are still very strongly anchored and usually exist alongside or coupled with the more recent forms of participation of industrial and commercial associations and/or employees' organizations in the respective sector. This traditional, corporalistic approach seems on the one hand to be anachronistic but on the other it did contribute to the survival of a network of small and medium-sized enterprises alongside large-scale industry, even in situations in which a strong domination of the latter was to be expected.

The small enterprises, craft and trade enterprises have often assumed training tasks for the workers in a specific industry. This also led industry to take on or copy certain practices in vocational training.

In some Member States the trade unions have taken over the role of the guilds or have absorbed them. In sociological literature, mention is also made of a trend to neocorporatism particularly in Denmark, the Netherlands and in some areas in the Federal Republic of Germany.

6. The role of the state in the social dialogue on vocational and continuing training

Most of the laws involving vocational training in the Member States have strong links with economic and employment policy.

Legislators, however, often only become active in periods of crisis or change; for example at the end of the 1960s when education and labour legislation was updated and then again in the mid/at the end of the 1970s with the appearance of the massive unemployment problem, particularly amongst young people and women.

Through state intervention coupled with simultaneous integration of the social partners, an attempt was made to solve the growing economic and structural problems. The state budgets came under pressure so that the early 1980s scarcely saw any active employment policy or a further extension of the education and training programmes under the aegis of public authorities.

Not least for the above reasons were the social partners and enterprises called on or encouraged to sponsor or organize initial and continuing vocational training. State incentives, the public financing and promotion of private training and integration programmes increased considerably, as did the role of the two sides of industry. This applies in general but must be seen against the background of the differing initial political, cultural and economic situations in the individual Member States.

Whether it wants or not, the state sets the tone in the social dialogue. At the very least, it is constantly present in the reference framework imposed by state bodies within which the social partners operate. Both sides must refer to it as it represents the so-called public interest and the system of values, be this the value of recognizing formal training or encouraging the state to support the efforts of the social actors, or at least allowing them to act.

The implementation of laws and legislative measures is the task of the state. It sets up organs, committees or institutions with or without the participation of the social partners. Thus, it can support or hinder, promote or neglect the social dialogue. The importance which a government attaches to the social dialogue varies according to its political composition. In democracies the exercise of power and state power are not conceivable without a counterforce. As the state does not intervene directly in private industry in Western European representative democracies, it allows those responsible considerable leeway when it comes to the concrete formulation of labour, social and vocational training legislation in their respective fields. This is, however, only possible if the institutions of the social partners concerned adopt a similarly organized representative style and promote a democratic opinion-forming process within their own organizations. Otherwise, they will lose the necessary credibility not only vis-à-vis the state but also vis-à-vis

their own members. The practice of state intervention greatly depends on this. Whereas liberal and conservative governments often allow the social partners a high degree of independence on issues of labour and industrial relations without allowing them to be directly involved in the social dialogue, socialist or social democratic governments are more inclined to let the social partners participate in chairing, promoting and sometimes even provoking a social dialogue. This applies also to the field of vocational and continuing training where efforts are made to balance interests. In addition to the balance of power between the organizations themselves, another determining factor is the desire and willingness of the state to promote such a dialogue.

If the public organs adopt a passive stance, then only rarely will such a dialogue take place and this fact is stressed, albeit more implicitly than explicitly, in the country reports.

6.1 Legislative measures

In day-to-day practice in the 12 Member States there is a wide variety of situations which range from a strong control function to a "laissez-faire" attitude. In vocational and continuing training it is only very rarely the case that legislative measures extend into the firms. Recently, however, there has been an increase in measures which go beyond tax relief and the promotion of certain training schemes and demonstration projects. Initial and continuing training programmes in companies are for the

most part state-financed; group training centres and training cooperatives are being set and extended; compensation for training expenditure is being paid, etc. All these moves are part of labour market policy to combat unemployment. Furthermore, they run further and retraining schemes in close cooperation with the companies and sectoral organizations. In some company statutes, continuing training committees have also been set up on the basis of statutory regulations (France).

Many special programmes were developed to promote the training of certain groups in the working population, such as women, young people, etc. In all Member States committees and advisory bodies have been set up to implement these programmes and schemes, i.e. state training and continuing training policy. They are described in Section II.1.

In Member States with a traditionally highly centralized administration and a legalistic approach, attempts have been made to regulate all components by means of legislation and/or regulations whereas in Member States with a federal or decentralized structure, legislators only lay down a relatively broad framework which is then filled in by the actors themselves, in some cases in the form of self-administration. Whereas in the former a dialogue between the two main parties usually only takes place with state assistance, in the other the state only becomes active when the two sides have already agreed on certain principles.

All countries have problems "communicating" between the different levels of state intervention. In some cases this is a problem of communicating the agreements reached at national level to the lower levels, whereas in the others, state action is frequently prompted by pressure from below.

On many occasions, the legislators - and this applies to all Member States in the field of vocational and continuing training and labour market policy - only become active when crises or conflicts become obvious; by then of course, these crises or conflicts are coupled with a polarization of the positions of those concerned. This means that communication between the parties involved in the social dialogue is frequently rendered more difficult.

In vocational and continuing training it seems to be very important, particularly as investments in this field have a medium or long-term effect, that the social dialogue is placed on an ongoing and institutionally sound basis at all levels.

6.2 Imbalance in the practice of state intervention in the social dialogue

Almost everywhere it is possible to identify a lack of professionalism not only among the social partners but also among the competent authorities. The responsible persons are frequently handicapped by the lack of expert and scientific back-up from technical colleges or universities,

vocational training and economic research units, etc. Only a small circle of experts decides in many Member States on issues regarding vocational and continuing training policy. This shortcoming is particularly obvious at regional and local levels. If a basis for decision-making is not provided through constantly updated research and expert reports, it is hard for those responsible to take expert decisions. They then stick to the basics where they have difficulty reaching agreement. The task of state offices, research institutes and planning bodies is, therefore, to provide these people with the data necessary for them to reach agreement on decisions. They have to ensure that the private interests of the one or the other side do not gain the upper hand and that the interests of the participants in and recipients of vocational and continuing training are placed at the centre, without neglecting company and overall social interests.

Educational and socio-political aspects will otherwise run the risk of being dominated by economic and labour market issues. The legislators at all levels have to take care to ensure that social unity is guaranteed and that the participants in education and vocational training are allowed to play a real role in the Community and actively shape their living and working conditions.

7. On the autonomy of the organizations of social partners in the field of vocational training

The role the organizations of social partners play as organizers of training services is dependent on several factors and differs from country to country. We have no intention of conducting a comparative study on the basis of the country reports as

- firstly, it is unproductive to isolate individual facets and to compare them without considering the circumstances that have given rise to them, and
- secondly, the reports have been construed in a variety of ways, and we would not even have enough common points of comparison.

In spite of this, an analysis of the reports does allow facts to be established and trends to be identified.

A first observation maintains that the accomplishment of this task is primarily dependent on the behaviour of the third partner, the state.

If the state sees itself as an important element in this field, it can lead to a certain degree of inactivity in the organizations. On the other hand, if the state shows a tendency to transfer responsibility to the organizations and to create conditions under which they can participate in training, the organizations will assuredly react differently. The report of the Federal Republic of Germany is proof of this: the fact that a consensus must be reached prior to each and every decision on legal

provisions and the existence of appropriate legal regulations ensure that the social partners are, in fact, drawn into the vocational training process. Thus it is the task of the social partners to conduct initial vocational training at regional level through the chambers of industry, commerce and crafts - the employers' organizations with the legal status of a corporation under public law and in which the employees' organizations are represented. The Federal Institute for Vocational Training (BIBB) gives professional support at federal level and coordinates training policies.

The Dutch report presents us with a different picture: the state refrains from direct contact with industry as far as possible and encourages decentralization and privatization, in which even the Ministry for Education and Science is involved. The example-setting role of the state is leading to a gradual assumption of joint responsibility, in which the government sees itself more as a third partner than as the controlling authority.

From a practical point of view, concrete measures are being taken to bring training into alignment with the market. Legal regulations issued recently mean that the universities can supply the market with training services for which they can use their knowledge and their facilities. Similar legal provisions are being prepared for vocational training schools on level 2 of secondary education.

Second observation: the responsibility of the organizations varies considerably depending on whether initial training, apprenticeships or continuing training is involved.

- Normally, sole responsibility for initial training is held by the state (which shares the responsibility with the regions), and the social partners play only an advisory role in this respect.
  The French report clearly underlines the role of the state, which takes responsibility for planning, financing, administering and assessing this training. In advisory proceedings with advisory authorities, all the powers of decision lie with the body seeking advice.
  The Dutch report furnishes proof of this as well. Up until now education and also training policy have come exclusively and centrally under the jurisdiction of the state. The existing advisory bodies confine themselves to submitting opinions on educational policy without interfering in the decision-making process.

- When it comes to apprenticeships, however, the state and the social partners always share responsibility, even if the balance of power is not the same in all countries with regard to this.
  In the Federal Republic of Germany, the state has a strong influence on apprenticeships (which moreover counts as one branch of the training system). In

actual fact it is, however, the employers' and employees' organizations which are more directly responsible for organizing and conducting training on various levels and in various sectors. The state and the regions in France continue to play a predominant role, even if they are no longer the exclusive agencies. The organization of training within the apprenticeship framework and the awarding of certificates still basically fall into the domain of the state and the regions.

- In the case of continuing training, on the other hand, the balance of power looks somewhat different: whereas state initiatives take the form more of therapeutic measures on the labour market, enterprises deal first and foremost with continuing training and provide training which is able to cover their respective needs in a satisfactory manner. As already mentioned, this training usually consists of adaptive measures. Since the social partners are normally involved in schemes initiated by the state, they participate only minimally in training projects organized by enterprises.

Consequently, the social partners have assumed the prime task of determining new qualification needs by analyzing training requirements and training possibilities in the individual sectors and by providing corresponding training schemes. For this purpose the unions and the employers' organizations in practically every country sustain their

own training facilities to which the state often contributes financially (their contribution depending on the type of training and the amount of capital the organizations have themselves). The involvement of the organizations, be it individual or joint, varies according to the country and the economic sector. It was difficult to ascertain from the reports, however, what importance was attached to these measures in each and every case. The study of what is being undertaken in the individual countries in the construction sector, in the metalworking industry and in banking will throw more light on this.

Third observation: the degree of autonomy of the social partners as providers of training services does not seem to be the same in continuing training as in initial training.

Whereas initial training/apprenticeships are normally run according to specific structures, within which the role of the social partners is defined and opportunities to intervene are slight, the opposite applies to continuing training. There are normally no precise legal regulations for continuing training; it is provided by a wide range of institutions which enjoy greater freedom. And finally, continuing training is being provided to an increasing extent on a training market, in which "supply" is attuned to "demand" and does not lead to recognised qualifications. If one examines the Federal Republic of Germany's report from this angle, i.e. whether the providers of initial training also have clearly defined tasks and responsibilities when it comes to continuing training, then it

becomes apparent that there are no precise stipulations and that a great number of agencies provide continuing training, with even the organizations of social partners ending up in competition in this market and bowing to market conditions. Even in the French report they speak of a virtual continuing training market and here the providers of training might mean either public or private institutions which enjoy great freedom; they decide on the shape and form of the training, draw up the curricula, decide on the teaching and technical aids to be implemented, the manner in which knowledge is to be examined, and the evidence that training has been undertaken. In only a few instances are the social partners involved in the decision-making process.

Fourth observation: the role of the organizations as providers of training services but also as bodies directly involved in conducting training differs depending on country, region, sector and enterprise.

The report on the situation in France indicates that the social partners are mainly involved at a sectoral level in continuing training. It is through joint committees that they participate in vocational training matters and in drawing up new regulations. Within their jurisdiction within such bodies, they decide on the focal points of further training policy of particular occupational groups and negotiate on training objectives and means. The distribution of resources stemming from enterprises is decided on in these fora. And it is here that the

organizations exert the greatest influence in attuning training to the actual demand arising as a result of technological progress in the respective sectors. In the Federal Republic of Germany as well, the organizations of social partners are involved at sectoral level in the development of vocational training and they maintain and operate external training centres which complement training in enterprises. These centres which also offer continuing training are usually under the control of employers and chambers; the union representatives are involved in their administration. The organizations round off the services provided by the state and make supplementary training facilities available. These centres are mainly active in craft occupations although they do sometimes work for industry.

All the reports indicated, however, the organizations of social partners are only minimally involved in training in companies; decisions on this lie solely with the employers. The size of the enterprise is of prime importance in this respect, however. The social partners are much more involved in large enterprises which have considerable resources available for training purposes.

Fifth observation: the vocational training opportunities provided by the organizations of social partners depend greatly on the degree of centralization and the technical and financial resources they have at their disposal.

Only organizations which are well organized and have the

corresponding financial and technical possibilites as well as qualified personnel at their disposal are in a position to prepare and conduct training schemes which fulfil the expectations of those they are supposed to represent:

- For the employers' organizations, training is an instrument to develop the company,
- For the employees' organizations, training is a means for the individual to advance himself.

The strict structure and centralization of the German organizations are assuredly major reasons for the fact that they are in a position to set up training facilities.

The greater ability of the employers' organizations to organize training, as was evident in the reports, can certainly also be attributed to their relatively strong cohesion. In contrast to this, the trade unions often have differing opinions on vocational training issues, and this undermines their ability to organize any measures of note.

Finally, technical and scientific knowledge in the field of vocational training which is at the actual disposal of the organizations is absolutely essential if they wish to be actively involved in the study of problems and the search for solutions.

In some countries the trade unions have been suffering since time immemorial from the consequences of their representatives being inadequately versed in training issues. This inevitably places them at a disadvantage as

partners in the social dialogue.

Nevertheless, the reports indicated that efforts were being made to improve the level of expertise in the organizations and at the same time to expand the information networks available to them.

Sixth observation: the responsibility or joint responsibility of the organizations when it comes to conducting vocational training also results from varying traditions and "cultures" which prevail in vocational training at national level and above all in the individual sectors.

Germany is exemplary here although Belgium can also serve as an example: apprenticeship training is normally the joint responsibility of the state and the social partners in all Member States. For decades in Belgium, however, it has been the sole responsibility of the employers' organizations representing small and medium-sized industries. Training which is organized and developed from the two institutions for continuing training in small and medium-sized enterprises comes under the jurisdiction of professional associations and employers' organizations encompassing various professional or occupational groups. The government and the employers are equally responsible for financing the schemes; decisions are taken jointly with representatives of the training institutions. The role of the trade unions is extremely limited in such cases. Any noteworthy differences in the behaviour of the individual sectors can just as easily be attributed in some cases to

the various "cultures" inherent in the sectors.

Seventh observation: the extent to which the organizations take action greatly depends on their conception of themselves.

The behaviour of the organizations always depends on the interests they are supposed to be defending. Of course the interests of employers' and employees' organizations diverge and their relations are by their very nature loaded with conflict.

In as far as they are conscious of their responsibility for economic and social development over and above their own political interests, however, they automatically take action individually or jointly by means of which the existing problems can be solved in the most suitable manner. This is also one indicator of the degree of their autonomy, in particular vis-à-vis the third partner, the state.

Italy is a good example of this: certain large enterprises are very committed and play a central role in reforming training. They are converting their training centres into "performance centres" which conduct research, planning and training on a middle and higher level for graduates of technical colleges and universities (e.g. ANCIFAP-IRI, ISVOR-FIAT and ELEA-OLIVETTI).

In addition to this, certain employers' organizations have

created highly specialized training centres, administration schools for top executives and technology centres at local level with the help of regional and communal authorities. A few trade union organizations have also developed a noteworthy activity; they are conducting studies on existing problems and are looking for various solutions. The research institutes of the trade unions and the various agreements made with the universities play a fundamental role here.

Eighth observation: the provision of vocational training on the part of the organizations is closely connected with economic pressure and technological development.

If the development of the role of the organizations in this field is examined, it can be seen that industry's initiative in creating training facilities normally stems from shortcomings in the institutionalized system and serves the purpose of covering a company's own needs. Since training provided by the state is frequently intangible and lags behind developments in industry and the "urgent" and special needs that arise in the wake of new developments, the organizations, and frequently it is the employers' organizations, take initiatives to remedy existing deficiencies. The trade union organizations have mainly limited themselves within the scope of this task to offering training aiming to increase the adaptability and mobility of the work force. Common measures conducted by the organizations of both sides can only exist if the objectives of both sides partly overlap.

8. Vocational training as a subject of the social dialogue

The role of the social partners within the framework of vocational training can be analyzed just as easily at a normative level as at the level of its organization and mechanisms in its day-to-day realization.

It is necessary to identify the qualitative and quantitative aspects of the role of the social partners, its institutional form, its political and cultural character in conjunction with vocational training. The specific conditions prevailing in each individual Member State practically preclude any form of comparative study. For this reason the following remarks are perforce of a general nature; they do attempt to shed a little light on the situation, however.

Vocational Training as "Cultural Data"

One approach is to see vocational training as a subject of the social dialogue from the angle of cultural reality. It is indisputably the case that the social dialogue is more developed wherever its characterizing cultural matrix, i.e. work in all its forms, establishes ethical-social values; vocational training is not queried there; it has become an essential condition.

The situation in the Federal Republic of Germany, Denmark and the Netherlands e.g. draws attention in various ways to the fact that the collective interest in vocational training is immense. In contrast to this is the situation in countries in which the dichotomy between intellectual

and manual work, i.e. between "knowing" and "doing", is more marked, such as is the case in Italy, Greece and Spain. In these countries vocational training is generally regarded less highly and is often considered second-rate to more "high-minded" graduate and post-graduate university courses. In the latter countries the social debate is situated more in a political context and revolves more around school education and the universities. Of course this does not allow any direct conclusions to be made about the involvement of the social partners in issues of vocational training; it is nevertheless a state of affairs which cannot be denied and which must be given consideration when assessing the situation.

Vocational Training Within the Framework of Industrial Relations

A second way to approach the problem is to place the various concepts of vocational training of both sides i.e. the trade unions and the employers' organizations, in relation to issues of tariff policy:

- vocational training as an appendage of tariff policy or
- vocational training independent of tariff policy.

In the first instance vocational training is seen as part and parcel of the tariff structure and thus of the classification of employees, who are correspondingly bound to and protected by the trade unions. For enterprises this leads to costs; this is the case in Italy and in the United Kingdom where we find that the unions and their vocational training objectives are highly politicized. In

Italy vocational training is an instrument of professionalization and of people's cultural and political development (cf. the 150-hour law in Italy).

In the second case, vocational training is separated by and large from questions of tariff policy as e.g. in the Federal Republic of Germany, and thus separated from topics more likely to be the subject of conflicts within the framework of the social dialogue. Here the involvement of the social partners is aimed more strongly at finding agreement and at vocational training, which is defined as a common necessity and for the mutual use of both sides.

Vocational Training as a System

The contents of the social dialogue in the field of vocational training depend to a great extent on the "model", which forms the basis for defining the employment system:

- On the one hand, there are systems in which initial vocational training is primarily conducted in schools or in full-time education, as is most commonly the case in France, Spain, Italy and Belgium. In such instances, the involvement of the social partners is generally restricted to a purely advisory role. The dialogue is more strongly defined by questions of continuing vocational training and issues of adult education with the intention of maintaining jobs for employees, increasing employment and being instrumental in any changes in work organization. The opportunity to avail oneself of paid training and

continuing training leave is generally widely spread in such cases.

- When initial vocational training is more highly integrated in the world of work, as e.g. in the Federal Republic of Germany, more extensive forms of cooperation exist. These extend to autonomous vocational training with the state organs allowing this and giving appropriate guarantees. In such cases, the dialogue takes place within a strongly institutionalized framework and covers the entire system of initial and continuing vocational training, i.e. those questions concerning the vocational integration of young workers as well as adult education related to the labour market. The situation is similar in Denmark, the Netherlands and in Luxembourg.

Wherever there is more involvement, it is often accompanied by corresponding service facilities, staff units and research facilities. They allow the social dialogue to be conducted more professionally and pertinently as is the case e.g. with the Federal Institute for Vocational Training (Bundesinstitut für Berufsbildung) in the Federal Republic of Germany or with the sector-related foundations (Stichtingen) in the Netherlands.

They assist in developing training ordinances and in preparing planning and decision-making aids e.g. in the form of specialized and scientific analyses and prognoses.

At the same time they prepare teaching media, training programmes and vocational profiles.

An alternative to tripartite administration of vocational training is when the trade unions or employers develop and administer their own training centres partly with public funds, as is the case in Italy, and even more so in the field of continuing training in many other Member States as well (Denmark, Federal Republic of Germany, France and Belgium).

In summary it can be said:

The role of the social partners in vocational training is largely determined by the policy pursued by the public authorities. National realities are influenced by a series of dichotomies:

- between general education and vocational training,
- between schools and the world of work,
- between initial training and continuing training,
- between knowing and doing, etc..

Wherever these dichotomies are more evident, we have a stronger politicization of the dialogue which focusses simultaneously on normative discussions both with regard to vocational training as well as its institutions. Wherever the two respective branches are less sharply divided and more strongly integrated, the dialogue is more pertinent, allowing common interests of employees and

employers to form the basis of cooperation on issues of vocational training and continuing training.

9. Preliminary results from the analysis of the situation in EC Member States

Despite the immense commitment of the individual teams of authors both within the framework of the individual country studies as well as in this synthesis report, it has not been possible to obtain satisfactory answers to all the questions posed at the beginning. The studies themselves are, however, far more useful than this synthesis report suggests. They deserve more detailed evaluation, particularly in the context of each individual country.

A series of important questions can still be answered even if the initial situation in the Member States differs greatly. While some countries can point to a long tradition of social dialogue at all levels of educational, vocational, labour market and social issues, others are beginning to put out tentative feelers on the same issues, usually at centralized state level to begin with. Several reports describe, against this background, decentralizing processes in the direction of regions, sectors and enterprises. They give evidence of the fact that relations between the social partners are always, on the one hand, a function of centralized state laws, regulations and guidelines but on the other hand, that their shape and form, contents and the type of cooperation between both sides and the public authorities also depend on other factors. These include in particular:

- the strength of the organizations and their commitment,
- their willingness and ability to become actively

involved in issues concerning the community or society as a whole,

- an organizational culture modeled on that of other social institutions with a correspondingly high degree of credibility not only among its own members but over and above these as well,
- a policy aimed concomitantly at preservation and change, which acts promptly to incorporate foreseeable economic and social developments into its strategy.

All the reports underline the significant changes which the social dialogue is currently experiencing with respect to vocational training and continuing training. Demands on quality and the need to increase the amount of training offered are growing at an unprecedented rate. Public education alone would appear unable to cope with these demands. The task would likewise be too great for enterprises and the social partners if they were to attempt to meet these demands without state commitment. The development of production conditions appears to be an increasing hindrance to learning on the job. Out-of-company training must be increased and placed alongside in-company learning processes in order to improve the standard of qualifications, to generalize and to place all members of the work force in a position to partake actively in the shaping of their working and living conditions as well as cooperating with others to open up new areas of activities themselves.

This was one argument which prompted the development of intermediary advisory, planning and development bodies in all the Member States. And representatives of public authorities and educational and training centres are usually represented in these committees alongside the appointed representatives of the employers' and employees' organizations. They are frequently to be found in decentralized form at local and regional levels with the social partners playing a very important role alongside the central, regional and local authorities.

Although this development is cited in the reports, it will be important to examine in more detail the objectives, tasks and working methods of these bodies .

It becomes apparent from this that centralized-state labour market and social policies or even policies common throughout the entire EC must find their equivalents on local, regional and sectoral levels. This is the only way to ensure the necessary links from top to bottom and bottom to top. Local and regional development strategies must complement individual enterprise strategies on the one hand and overall state programmes including EC structural policies on the other hand. They represent an important link between both levels, which is of quite particular significance for the development of vocational and continuing training in view of its medium-term and long-term effects.

The European Community has played an increasingly important

role in recent years in stimulating and supporting such a development. If in the past it was more concerned with promoting the social dialogue as a reaction to the transition problems of young people and women moving from school life or vocational training to working life, in the future they will direct their efforts more to problems of continuing training, retraining and further training of older members of the work force, employees and enterprises, the unemployed and the employed. This trend is also apparent in analyses on developments in the individual countries. And in the sphere of continuing training, the cooperation and assistance of both parties, i.e. the trade unions and employers, are even more essential than in issues concerning the initial vocational training of young people. This cooperation will have to be embedded in a more continuous and more strongly institutionalized basis than in the past, however.

IV. Problems and Prospects of the Development of the Social Dialogue in Vocational Training at the EC Level

1. Current problem complex

According to its treaties, the European Community has a quite strongly defined responsibility to develop a common vocational training policy. This policy must bear in mind the goals of harmonizing living and working conditions in the different Member States (Art. 118 of the Treaty of Rome) and guaranteeing economic and social cohesion in the accomplishment of the internal market by 1992. The promotion of the social dialogue between agents of the employers' organizations and the trade unions is seen as being a contribution to this.

Concrete ideas as to the form this promotion should take, especially at EC level, remain to a large extent unclear. There are indeed a number of committees, discussion groups, decisions and agreements at EC level. There is also not least a series of planning and development principles published by CEDEFOP, which the Member States and the EC occasionally take up and incorporate in their respective efforts. The Council and the European Parliament, as legislative organs of the EC, have nevertheless restricted themselves so far mainly to supporting programmes of action, pilot projects and the repeated official statements of resolutions. Admittedly, they have of course in some cases taken the work of the social partners into consideration. They are only able to guarantee to a limited

extent, however, the translation of more comprehensive ideas, such as the objective of guaranteeing all young people, upon completion of their compulsory schooling, direct access to vocational training which is recognized on the labour market (cf. Council Resolution of December 1987). The European Social Fund is the sole body able to exert a stronger influence especially on those Member States which profit most from its funds. Its criteria are kept so general, however, that the most varied forms and contents of vocational and continuing training have been supported without them being able to guarantee that the training provided is well-organized.

The surveys and the comparative analysis of the situation in the Member States have shown that the social partners engage in a wide range of different forms of relations and activities when it comes to vocational training. This participation in training issues depends on the interest of the various parties, which in turn is different, depending on Member State, sector and employment structure. In highly developed vocational training systems, the contribution is usually more strongly defined than in less developed ones. Even within each individual system there is a wide spectrum of different situations. Both are a hindrance to this study and make it seem difficult to draw unambiguous conclusions, in particular for possible action at Community level. For this reason, rather than drawing conclusions, we wish to try and point out prospects for future developments and to propose a series of initiatives.

2. Future prospects

The year 1992 will represent an important turning point in the development of the European Community and its institutions. This turning point has two dimensions: an economic and a social dimension which takes in the "social dialogue".

It is difficult to mould the elements of social consultations into a European concept, although dialogue and harmonization processes of one sort or another exist everywhere at Member State level. All these differences have not, however, prevented the social partners from adopting two common statements at EC level or from continuing the dialogue at the highest level. The future and the success of the social dialogue basically depend, nevertheless, on the solidarity of the partners, both in the Member States themselves as well as between the more developed and the less developed Member States. A connection between the various levels of the social dialogue (local, regional, national and EC) does not always seem to be guaranteed. On the basis of the various analyses of the twelve studies in the Member States, it can be said: The prospects for the development of the social dialogue in vocational training also depend particularly on the selection of suitable subjects, which need to be given priority: One proposal deals with the focal point of continuing training and the levels at which harmonization and negotiations in this sphere should be intensified: the regions, sectors and enterprises.

CEDEFOP has repeatedly stressed the importance which the social partners attach to in-company continuing training, i.e. in industry and public administration. At the same time, the sometimes significant efforts of large companies have been stressed while the involvement of small and medium-sized enterprises and more recent, local employment initiatives have, up until now, tended to be unsatisfactory and very unevenly distributed. Today, it seems to be undisputed that the continuing training of the work force is the responsibility of the enterprises themselves:

- The enterprise is the place where the necessary preparation for new technological developments and vocational qualifications must occur; at the same time, it is the place for taking preventive measures against unemployment;
- It is in and with the enterprises that the alternance training model, in which training phases in schools or state-financed training centres can be alternated with practical work and on-the-job experience, finds its full justification; it can open its doors to the unemployed.

On the one hand, this means that the role of enterprises in the field of continuing training must be intensified; on the other hand, it must nevertheless also be ensured that in-company strategies take their place in the public responsibility for economic and social development. In this framework, in which the coordination among institutions has to take place, it is quite irrelevant whether

private or public, employer or employee-oriented facilities are meant. In the past and up to this very day, CEDEFOP has advocated complementary activities and the principle of mutual supplementation e.g. even in financing through private and public organizations, so that any efforts made are able to unfurl their greatest effectiveness as well as guarantee better coherency in continuing training policy.

In the area of vocational training and continuing training, implementing a policy of collective agreements is just as disputed as in other spheres of social policy. Through negotiations, the social partners define their very own objectives and do this as an expression of their autonomy and their right to reach collective agreements. Current attempts e.g. in the area of shortening working hours and part-time work are particularly interesting in this connection. Collective agreements which link the various forms of shorter working hours with continuing vocational training possibilities are likely to become more important in the very near future.

Generally speaking, the use and efficiency of negotiations between the employers' representatives and the trade unions, especially at an enterprise level, must be emphasized.

Such efforts are profitable for both sides, particularly when they are supported by public authorities at local and regional levels. In a democratic and social community they have a series of financial responsibilities towards

the citizens involved, should these e.g. lose their jobs.

In-company agreements, as well as agreements between employers' and employees' organizations for specific occupations and occupational groups or sectors could create the material and social prerequisites to ensure that enough employees engage early enough in continuing training or retraining. Company-related continuing vocational training can become part of paid labour to a certain extent. Training centres and training cooperatives servicing several enterprises, and vocational schools etc. could be set up jointly by the social partners and public sponsors. They would have the common task of ensuring that further and continuing vocational training was not limited to preparing trainees for a specific job, but rather that it sought to offer job qualifications recognized by and usable on the entire labour market.

Even the trade unions, which have to worry about potential and actual members, will not be able to avoid a reorientation. If the problems of the labour market crisis, the destruction of the environment and socially acceptable reorganization of production are to be solved, and if an aggravation of existing conflicts is to be avoided, we need an increased degree of professionalism accompanied at the same time by an improvement in the ability of the individual to communicate and to learn. Each and every person must be able to be actively involved in the necessary reorganization so that one will not become the victim and the other the victor of the crisis. Social

recognition of vocational qualifications and the accompanying fields of activity and responsibility will gain increased significance at all levels of company and social organization.

The traditional social separation of work into intellectual and physical categories will be done away with through the increased application of information technologies among other things. Recognized qualifications can no longer be withheld from workers who formerly carried out practical tasks, as is still the case on occasion even today. While observing the necessary flexibility and job mobility, more importance has to be attached to the definition and necessary demarcation of jobs without reverting to the guilds and fellowships. It can only be successfully guaranteed, however, by including the various interests groups. Such a definition cannot be prescribed by legislature alone; it must be accompanied by compromise among the various groups, which do indeed have highly conflicting interests. It is only when this compromise exists that laws, ordinances and decisions of public channels can be put into practice in line with their original intentions. Without local control and without the assistance of those involved and their representative organs, i.e. in particular without the cooperation of the work force, it would hardly be possible to develop an adequate policy in the area of vocational and continuing training, which would be able to satisfy the demands of a highly developed society.

The Member States and central, local and regional author-

ities, the social partners and the EC Commission would seem in principle to have identified the lion's share of the problems as well as approaches to solve them. A series of EC proposals is currently under discussion. They must be put into practice as soon as possible. CEDEFOP has likewise made its expert contribution in this respect (cf. in particular CEDEFOP flash No. 2/88).

In this connection, the EC Commission has submitted proposals to the Council to develop continuing vocational training and adult education. These proposals include a series of general principles and a programme of action, which are to be put into practice by the Member States in the respective specific context of relations between governmental bodies and employers' and employees' organizations. In these the sectoral approach, as it already exists in the steel industry inter alia, could find wider application in other economic sectors, occupational groups and areas of activity.

Alongside improvements in the competitiveness of enterprises and the issue of job preservation, the focal points are creating new employment possibilities and reintegrating the long-term unemployed into the work force. Provision of publicly sponsored continuing vocational training for the long-term unemployed, under consideration of the various target groups which are especially threatened or suffer particularly from unemployment, demand special attention, namely through the conceptual and financial participation of the enterprises and their employees (cf. CEDEFOP flash No. 10/87).

The structure of the training provided in all the Member States is more or less divided into two parts: on the one hand, publicly sponsored retraining and further training for the unemployed and on the other hand, in-company and company-oriented continuing vocational training for employees. This should be changed in favour of a cooperative and integrative continuing training strategy, by means of which both the unemployed and the employed would be able to engage in training to open up new and common fields of employment as well as to preserve existing opportunities. This can only occur in a reasonable fashion, however, if all three parties cooperate: the state, trade unions and employers' organizations, and namely at all the above-mentioned levels.

The EC can play an important role in developing the framework conditions necessary for putting such a comprehensive continuing vocational training strategy into practice, in particular through encouraging, more than it has done in the recent past, the social dialogue both between confederations as well as between organizations active in specific sectors. This support could also make an immense contribution toward guaranteeing social cohesion within the framework of the EC internal market by 1992.

On the basis of several years of studies and a number of conferences and congresses organized by CEDEFOP or with its assistance, CEDEFOP has made great efforts to promote

the social dialogue between all partners, including state bodies. This they have done at all levels - local, regional, national and Community - in order to take up the above-mentioned challenges and to indicate how to work towards viable solutions.

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